

PLEASE SUPPORT HB115
(Introduced by Rep. Julie French)

EXHIBIT 2
DATE 2-18-09
HB 115

- Towers and facilities built and owned by rural cellular companies in sparsely populated areas not only provide the technology required for carrying the calls of their subscribers. They also provide the technology that is used by the subscribers of other wireless providers which enables them to transport and to complete their calls.
- The rural cellular companies do not cherry pick locations for placement of towers. Ever-mindful of public safety, they place towers to reach the population beyond county seats and larger communities.
- The typical cost for constructing one cellular tower is between \$350,000 and \$400,000. It is extremely difficult to recover expenses given the extent of the subscriber base of rural providers – a base limited by virtual of the sparse population of the entire service areas. Rural providers serve no major population centers and therefore have no ability to average costs or recover expenses from higher density areas.
- Rural providers are committed not just to extending towers but also to expanding wireless data capabilities in rural areas.
- Towers and facilities owned by rural providers are key to economic development and business expansion in rural Montana.
- Montana rural companies have a long history of commitment to rural communities. Investments made in rural Montana by rural companies stay in Montana.
- Cellular networks require significant, long term capital investments. Tax stability and predictability is vital for expansion of rural cellular networks.
- Cellular service is no longer a luxury. It is essential, *especially* in rural environments. Access to cellular service affects commerce, agriculture, and public safety.
- Those living in and traveling through rural areas, with thousands of miles of secondary roads, need access to high quality, cellular service. Only the rural providers have demonstrated their commitment to providing quality cellular service in these areas. Rural school children travel those miles of roads without the security of access to cellular communications.
- Montana has miles of international borders. Cellular service is vital for our national security.

WE ASK FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF HB 115.

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